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COVID-19 Vaccine Update: Expanded Third/Booster Dose 6 Months After Dose 2 Guidance

Effective November 10, 2021, a booster/third dose of Pfizer/Comirnaty™ or Moderna/Spikevax™ is recommended for people ≥ 18 years of age at increased risk of serious illness from COVID-19, their caregivers and close/household contacts at least 6 months after dose 2. This includes:

- people aged 70 years and older
- residents of personal care homes or congregate elderly person housing sites (e.g., assisted living)
- individuals with the following chronic health conditions:
    - an immune system moderately to severely weakened by disease or medical treatment (manitoba.ca/covid19/vaccine/eligibility-criteria.html#immunocompromised)
    - cardiac or pulmonary disorders (ex: cystic fibrosis)
    - neurologic or neurodevelopmental conditions
    - diabetes and other metabolic diseases
    - renal or liver disease
    - anemia or hemoglobinopthy
    - asplenia or hyposplenism (including sickle cell disease)
    - obesity (body mass index ≥ 40)
    - tuberculosis disease (current or previous) OR latent tuberculosis (LTBI) where treatment has not been completed
    - human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), irrespective of CD4 count
- pregnant individuals
- health care personnel who have direct contact with patients, residents or clients
- First Nation, Métis and Inuit people
- individuals living north of the 53rd parallel of latitude or in a remote/isolated community
- individuals living or working in a congregate living facility (e.g., correctional facilities, group homes, homeless shelters)
- individuals experiencing homelessness
- individuals receiving homecare OR receiving any level of Community Living Disability Service support (or, as per family physician determination of equivalent levels of family support)

- individuals who have only received:
    - a viral vector vaccine (e.g., AstraZeneca/Vaxzevria™ or Janssen); OR
    - one or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine that is not approved by Health Canada*
- or as recommended by a health care provider

**** NOTE:** people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised OR who have received one or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not approved by Health Canada, do not need to wait 6 months to receive a third dose (as is recommended for all other people); these individuals can receive a booster/third dose ≥ 28 days after their last dose.*

All individuals ≥ 18 years of age who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and are not included in the above list can further reduce their individual risk by getting a booster/third dose of an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer/Comirnaty™ or Moderna/Spikevax™) at least six months after their last COVID-19 vaccine.

In making the decision to proceed with a third/booster dose, clients should be counselled on the individual risks and benefits during the informed consent process, taking into consideration the following:

- risk of severe illness and death;
- risk of exposure;
- risk of declining protection from the vaccine, particularly when:
    - a shorter interval between dose one and two was used, &/OR
    - a longer time has elapsed since completion of the primary series.
- risk as it pertains to vaccine safety, particularly around myocarditis/pericarditis; and,
- use in Canada and worldwide, noting that Health Canada has approved the use of the third dose for Pfizer/Comirnaty™ only at this time. Health Canada is currently reviewing the booster dose submission for Moderna/Spikevax™.

The Clinical Practice Guidelines will be updated to reflect these changes and posted at www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/vaccine/healthcare-professionals.html, specifically pages 35 to 39 will include guidance on counselling individuals about the risks/benefits of a third/booster dose.

At this time, a third/booster dose does **NOT** impact an individual's ability to successfully apply for a Manitoba Immunization Card or the Pan-Canadian Proof of Vaccination Credential (PVC). More information is available at: manitoba.ca/covid19/vaccine/immunizationrecord/residents.html.

Recommended interval

Principles of immunology indicate that a longer interval between priming and booster doses of a vaccine results in a better and more durable response. Most studies on mRNA COVID-19 vaccine booster doses have used an interval of ≥ 6 months following the completion of the primary series, and submissions filed with regulatory authorities in the US, the Europen Union and Canada are for ≥ 6 months following the second dose, which was the interval used in booster dose trials for Pfizer/Comirnaty™ and Moderna/Spikevax™. **Unless explicitly indicated (as per the above note), third/booster doses are recommended to be given at**

least 6 months after the last COVID-19 vaccine dose (regardless of which vaccine products were used for previous dose(s)).

Public communications

The mRNA vaccine factsheet is being updated to reflect the above guidance and will be available at www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/vaccine/resources.html in the coming days.

Moderna/Spikevax™ dosing for third/booster doses *(as communicated in the memos dated November 3rd and November 5th)*

Where Moderna/Spikevax™ is provided for the third/booster dose, Manitoba adopted the following NACI recommendation as it pertains to dosage:

- For adults aged ≤ 69 years who are living in community: **use a half dose (50 mcg; 0.25ml)** of Moderna/Spikevax™ for third/booster doses.
- For adults aged ≥ 70 years who are living in community: **use a full dose (100 mcg; 0.5ml)** of Moderna/Spikevax™ for third/booster doses.
- For adults of any age who are living in a personal care home or congregate elderly persons housing site: **use a full dose (100 mcg; 0.5ml)** of Moderna/Spikevax™ for third/booster doses.
- For adults of any age who are moderately to severely immunocompromised: **use a full dose (100 mcg; 0.5ml)** of Moderna/Spikevax™ for third/booster doses.

There is no change to the Pfizer/Comirnaty™ third/booster dosage and, the full Moderna/Spikevax™ dosage (100 mcg; 0.5ml) is to be used for the primary series (dose 1 and dose 2).

When using the Moderna/Spikevax™ vaccine for third/booster doses, the maximum number of vial punctures permitted is 20. **After 20 punctures, the vial should be discarded.**

Please share this information with all relevant colleagues in your facility/clinic.

Sincerely,

"Original signed by"

Joss Reimer, MD FRCPC MPH
Medical Lead, Vaccine Implementation Task Force